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ABSTRACT

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PAPERS AND REPORTS

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by

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Abstract

An economically disadvantaged population of 60 white and 60 Negro males (CA's from 9 years to 14 years) were given an 150-item opinionnaire containing 7 measures of alienation, 6 measures of achievement motivation and 5 measures of attitudes toward school. As expected, Negroes exhibited greater degrees of alienation and more negative attitudes toward school. Negroes appeared to increase in achievement motivation over age while whites tended to decrease.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, increasing attention has been brought to bear on the numerous educational problems encountered in children who come from economically deprived environments. The data reported in the literature clearly documents the adverse effects of environmental impoverishment on the development of intellect (Haywood, 1966; Lesser, Fifer, & Clark, 1965; Skeels, 1964; Skodak & Skeels, 1949; among others). Similarly, several writers have shown that children living in homes located in disadvantaged neighborhoods exhibit inadequate language development (Bereiter & Englemann, 1966; Bernstein, 1960, 1962). In response to these and similar findings, new and innovative educational programs have been developed to remediate the deficiencies caused by the lack of proper nurturence found in many disadvantaged families (DiLorenzo, 1968; Gray & Klaus, 1965; Staats & Butterfield, 1965).

While the above studies clearly illustrate the negative effects of poverty on the development of requisite abilities for success in school, it can be argued that these findings represent only part of the larger picture of disruption accompanying economic deprivation which ultimately leads to educational problems. It is the present writers' contention that careful consideration must also be given to the attitudes and values that disadvantaged children bring with them to the school setting if new educational programs are to succeed. Similarly, a basic understanding of the relationship between

poverty and motivation for success in school must be developed by workers in the field, if the educational retardation associated with low economic status is to be overcome.

The purpose of the present investigation was to initiate exploratory research into the relationships between attitudes towards school and achievement motivation manifested by children from economically disadvantaged home environments. In order to develop an organized coherent picture of the way these variables operate, it was decided that the present research should be done within the context of alienation theory. Spilka (1967) points out that the concept of alienation refers to the nature of an individual's relationship to the environment, and this in turn has implications for the manner in which the individual responds to himself. People must make constant adjustments to the things and events in their milieu: i.e., family, friends, occupation, organizations, etc. Alienation occurs when these relationships between the person and the environment become discordant. For the alienated person, the social contexts in which he must operate become disagreeable, restrictive, hostile, chaotic, and incomprehensible.

The alienated individual does not feel that he is a participant in society. Under these circumstances, his ability to establish a positive identity or to realize his potential becomes extremely doubtful because of his inadequate relationship with his environment (Rubins, 1961; Vollmerhausen, 1961; Horney, 1964). Thus, the most

salient feature of alienation becomes the estrangement of the person from the world in which he lives. Underlying the alienated orientation may be feelings of powerlessness, aloneness, normlessness, meaninglessness, and so on that lead to estrangement from self. Self estrangement and estrangement from the environment may operate in circular fashion, so that one reinforces the other (Fromm, 1955; 1961; Bell, 1960; Nesbit, 1962).

That alienation is related to socio-economic status is well documented in the literature (Bell, 1957; Rhodes, 1964; Mizruchi, 1960). Invariably these authors have found that the lower an individual is with regard to socio-economic status the more alienated he is from society. Several writers have also studied the relationship between alienation and membership in an ethnic group. Lefcourt and Ladwig (1964) obtained higher normlessness and powerlessness scores for Negroes than for whites in their study of prison inmates. These results are similar to those reported by Hammonds (1964) who found that Negroes exhibited more anomie than whites regardless of socio-economic status. Another factor that has been studied in relation to alienation is amount of political participation. Dean (1960, 1961), Erbe (1964), and Thompson and Horton (1960) have commented that degree of political participation is inversely related to degree of alienation.

In summary, the above discussion points out that the alienated person has lost faith in the institutions in society. He feels that he cannot be an active participant in the organizations to which he

belongs. Alienation appears to be more typically a characteristic of people from the low socio-economic classes than of people from higher economic strata. In addition, it has been demonstrated that Negroes exhibit a greater amount of alienation than whites even though socio-economic status was controlled.

In terms of the above rationale, the present research was an attempt to analyze specifically the relationships between alienation, achievement motivation, and attitudes towards school as manifested by white and Negro children living in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. In addition, an attempt was made to evaluate changes in degree of alienation, achievement motivation, and attitudes towards school as a function of age during the late childhood years and the onset of adolescence.

METHOD

Subjects

Ten white and ten Negro males were selected from the Ybor City Boys' Club in Tampa, Florida, for each of the following age groups; 9-10 years, 11-12 years, and 13-14 years. The respective means and ranges for the white groups were: 10 years 2 months, (9 years 6 months to 10 years 10 months); 11 years 10 months, (11 years 0 months to 12 years 9 months); and 13 years 11 months, (13 years 3 months to 14 years 7 months). The respective means and ranges for the Negro

groups were: 9 years 10 months, (9 years 4 months to 10 years 8 months); 12 years 0 months, (11 years 2 months to 12 years 8 months); and 14 years 0 months, (13 years 3 months to 14 years 9 months).

Since the membership of the Ybor City Boys' Club consists of boys living in a hard-core ghetto area, it was decided to replicate the design using members of the West Tampa Boys' Club. The latter club was chosen to provide whatever comparisons might exist between a hard-core ghetto population and a population residing on the fringe of the ghetto. The respective means and ranges for the white groups from the West Tampa Boys' Club were: 10 years 2 months, (9 years 4 months to 10 years 11 months); 11 years 11 months, (11 years 0 months to 12 years 11 months); and 13 years 10 months, (13 years 2 months, to 14 years 10 months). The respective means and ranges for the Negro groups were: 9 years 11 months, (9 years 1 month to 10 years 11 months); 11 years 11 months, (11 years 0 months to 12 years 10 months); and 13 years 11 months, (13 years 3 months to 14 years 10 months). Thus, the total design was a 2 (club) by 2 (race) by 3 (age) factorial with 10 subjects per cell for a total of 120 subjects.

The determination of economic disadvantage was based on father's occupation and neighborhood lived in. All subjects used were from families where the major wage earner was either unemployed or when employed, worked at a menial status occupation: i.e., day laborer, household servant, etc. The neighborhoods that the subjects lived in were typical of many urban slum areas. Housing was largely

limited to deteriorated houses occupied by more than one family unit and low cost housing projects characterized by overcrowdedness, poor sanitation, and lack of repair.

Measures

The alienation, achievement motivation, and attitude toward school measures used in the present study were developed by Spilka (1967). The alienation scale consisted of seven factors measuring the following dimensions of alienation: Factor I: Powerlessness; Factor II: A Conformist, Protestant Ethic vs. an Anti-Social Hopelessness; Factor III: Meaninglessness; Factor IV: Hopeful Friendliness; Factor V: Social Isolation; Factor VI: Normlessness; Factor VII: Theoretical General Alienation. A complete narrative of the content of all factors for the alienation measure along with sample items is presented in Table I.

The achievement motivation measure used in the present study was composed of six factors measuring the following dimensions: Factor I: High Aspirations - High Drive; Factor II: Work Anxiety; Factor III: Reluctant Effort with Aversion to Reading; Factor IV: A Calvinistic Work Ethic; Factor V: Theoretical Achievement Motivation I; Factor VI: Theoretical General Motivation. The content of these factors is summarized along with example items in Table I.

The attitudes towards school measure consisted of five factors assessing the following dimensions: Factor I: School Continuation

vs. Rejection; Factor II: Teacher Acceptance or Rejection; Factor III: School Uselessness; Factor IV: "Rational" Dislike of School and Factor V: Theoretical Attitude Toward School Scale. The narrative description of the school attitude factors is presented along with example items in Table I.

Procedures

An opinionnaire consisting of a total of 150 items for the factors discussed above was administered to the subjects selected for the present study. All testing was done with small groups of subjects (6-10 members) in rooms provided in the respective boys' clubs. In addition, several groups were tested in a mobile laboratory in order to facilitate the evaluation of more than one group at a time. After completing half the items on the test the subjects were given a 15 minute rest period in which the evaluator gave each subject a soft drink. On completion of the rest period the second half of the test was administered.

In order to guarantee the validity of responses to the items, the examiners were instructed to spend as much time as required to explain the content of a given item. This procedure was used because of the insufficient reading ability frequently encountered in disadvantaged children. In several cases it was necessary to remove a subject from the sample, because of a total lack of comprehension on his part of the task at hand.

TABLE I

FACTOR CONTENT OF ALIENATION, ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION, ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL MEASURES

Alienation	Achievement Motivation	Attitudes Toward School
I. Powerlessness This factor appears to stress the complexity of problems, the profusion and confusion of ideas that lead to self-estrangement and isolation. In general one is manipulated by others, overwhelmed by his circumstances and therefore might as well just go along with what is required because it is useless to fight. Sample Item: Trying to figure out how to get ahead in life is just too hard.	I. High Aspirations - High Drive This is a classic statement of the hard worker who aspires to greater efforts and in consequence, high goals. Sample Item: I would like to do something really big.	I. School Continuation vs. Rejection These items clearly illustrate acceptance or rejection of the school situation and its worth. There is some indication of the potential of regret if one desires to drop out of school. Sample Item: As soon as I get the chance I will probably leave school.
II. A Conformist, Protestant Ethic vs. an Anti-Social Hopelessness A conformist orientation which signifies an anti-alienative mode of adjustment. The themes of the Protestant Ethic prevail. Work is of prime importance, ability counts, school is useful, life is worthwhile, and one's family is reliably close by. This is a bipolar factor, the negative end focusing on a hopeless future and the baseness of human nature. Sample Item: Most of the time I feel that the work I'm doing is important and useful.	II. Work Anxiety Concern is expressed over job difficulty, complexity, job completion, and simply getting started working on a task. There is also an other-directed quality in this factor that suggests the importance of approval from others but not their close scrutiny of performance. Sample Item: I get mixed up when a job makes you do a number of different things.	II. Teacher Acceptance or Rejection The perception of, and relationship of, the children to the teacher is pictured in these questions. One sees the teachers as supportive and helpful or hostile and rejecting, especially relative to the children and their families. Some lack of understanding on the part of the teachers is also perceived. Sample Item: I find it hard to get along with teachers.

(Table I, con't.)

III. Meaninglessness

There is a reliance on luck and chance for progress with the idea that rules don't really hold so that meaningfulness is self-determined. Still one finds meaninglessness identified with a strong element of hopelessness.

Sample Item: With so many different religions around, one doesn't really know which to believe.

IV. Hopeful Friendliness

An anti-alienative factor which counters the hopelessness of social isolation. An optimistic future is posited with understanding among peoples.

Sample Item: The world in which we live is really a friendly place.

V. Psychosocial Isolation

Separateness, physical and mental, is stressed. Aloneness is perceived as the respondent's mode of existence.

Sample Item: I often feel people around here are not too friendly.

III. Reluctant Effort with Aversion to Reading

Apparently dislike of reading and difficulty handling what is read combines with the problem of confronting a trying task.

Sample Item: I hate to face up to a hard job.

IV. A Calvinist Work Ethic

Emphasizing the value of steady work.

Sample Item: I like to do my very best in whatever I try.

V. Theoretical General Achievement Motivation I (uses all items)

The original achievement motivation scale. This stresses ambition, high goals, steady and hard work as an avenue to success and achievement. A long range future orientation and a resistance to destructive anxiety and distraction is also presented.

III. School Uselessness

The feeling expressed is that the school is out of harmony with existential reality and thus is likely to attempt to teach either useless or harmful things. At best the school is simply irrelevant.

Sample Item: School doesn't really help a person to make a better life.

IV. "Rational" Dislike of School

A negative attitude toward school is coupled with recognition of the potential of real factors that may reduce the meaningfulness of education. Present is is also a component of helplessness in the face of the school situation.

Sample Item: I often feel trapped and helpless in school.

V. Theoretical Attitude Toward School Scale (uses all items)

An effort is made here to utilize all of the items originally constructed. These deal with all of the components in the foregoing factors, but try to get a broader picture of motivations and perceptions of the school situation.

(Table I, con't.)

VI. Normlessness

Here we find approval for breaking the rules of society, but implicit are ideas of conformity to unwritten rules, mostly of personal denotation. Getting ahead counts and a superficial conformity for appearance sake is acceptable.

Sample Item: Sometimes it's all right to get around the law if you don't actually break it.

VII. Theoretical General Alienation (uses all items)

These items derive from the theoretical notions of Dean, Seeman, and many others. They were designed to assess the following characteristics: Powerlessness, Normlessness, Psychosocial Isolation, Self-Estrangement, Hopelessness, Meaninglessness and alienation from institutional settings.

VI. Theoretical General Achievement Motivation

This measure consists of those items not included in the above factored scales (FI - FIV). It is strictly for experimental purposes. The content is quite similar to FV.

Sample Item: I like to be able to say that I have done a hard job well.

RESULTS

Upon completion of the administration of the alienation measure, scores for each factor of this instrument were tabulated for each subject. The scores were then analyzed across club, race, and age by means of a 2 x 2 x 3 factorial analysis of variance. Of the seven factors comprising the measure of alienation, five produced significant differences. Four of the factors; I: Powerlessness; III: Meaninglessness; VI: Normlessness; and VII: Theoretical General Alienation revealed significant main effects for race indicating that the Negro subjects were consistently more alienated than were the white subjects (respective F's for 1,108 df were 13.80; 12.88, 4.43, and 12.69; $P < .01$ for Factors I, III, VII; $P < .05$ for Factor VI).

In addition to the racial differences noted above, a significant main effect for age was noted for Factor IV: Hopeful Friendliness ($F = 3.81$ for 2,108 df; $P < .05$). The respective means for each of the age levels were 10.43 (9-10 year olds), 12.35 (11-12 year olds), and 12.13 (13-14 year olds). As noted in Figure 1, there was a substantial increase in alienation from the youngest age level to the middle age level which maintained itself at the oldest level. Analysis of the simple effects by means of the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicated that the differences between the means of the 9-10 and 11-12 groups, and the 9-10 and 13-14 groups were significant ($P < .05$). No significant difference was found between the 11-12 and 13-14 year old groups.

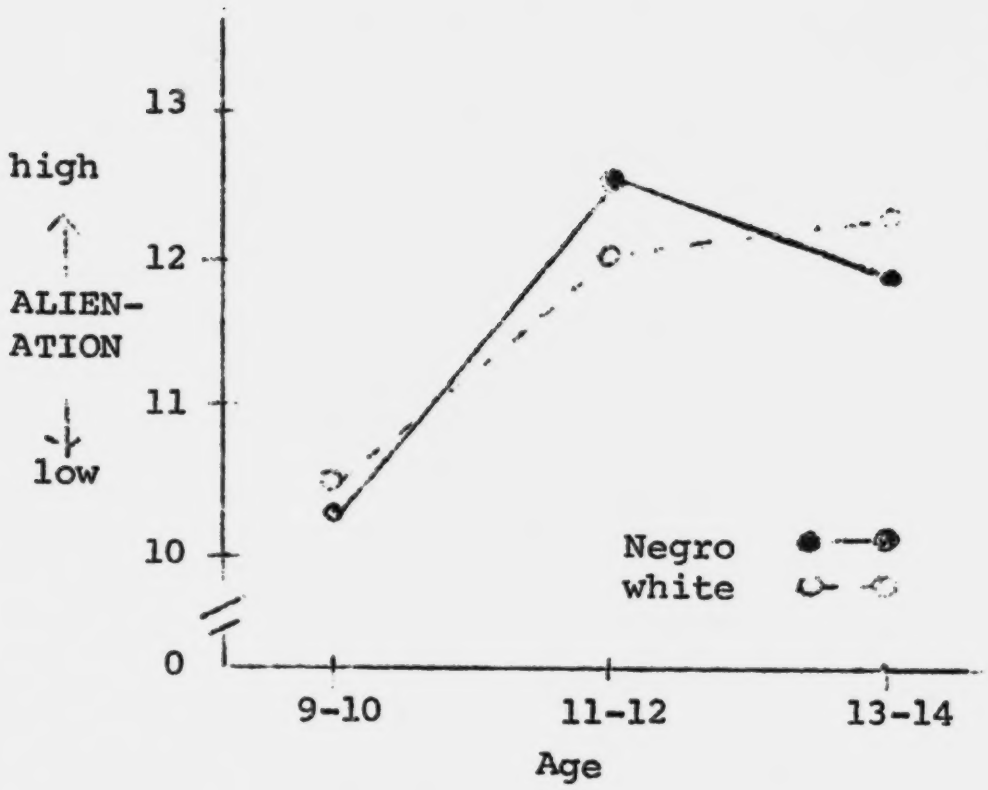

Figure 1. Age main effect for Alienation Factor IV: Hopeful Friendliness.

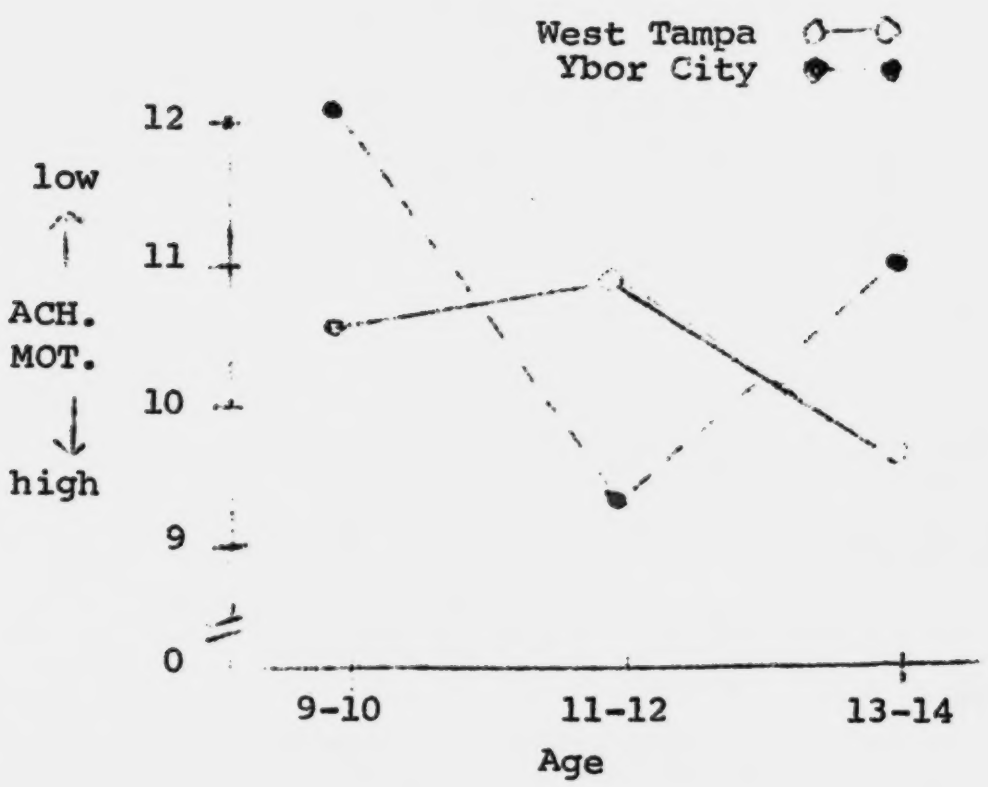

Figure 2. Age x Club interaction for Achievement Motivation Factor III: Reluctant Effort with Aversion to Reading.

Scores tabulated for the achievement motivation factors were analyzed across club, race, and age by means of a 2 x 2 x 3 factorial analysis of variance. Significant differences were found on two of the six factors comprising the achievement motivation measure. An age by club interaction was found on Factor III: Reluctant Effort with Aversion to Reading ($F = 3.093$ for 2,108 df; $P < .05$). Analysis of the simple effects using the Duncan Multiple Range Test revealed a significant difference between the means of the Ybor 9-10 year old and 11-12 year old groups (respective means = 12.00 and 9.30; $P < .05$) indicating a significant increase in motivation between the youngest and middle age levels. A significant difference was also found between the means of the Ybor 9-10 year olds and the West Tampa 13-14 year olds (respective means = 12.00 and 9.65; $P < .05$) indicating that the latter group was more motivated than the former group. The graph for the interaction found on Factor III is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 3 illustrates the significant race by age interaction found for Factor VI: Theoretical General Achievement Motivation ($F = 3.14$ for 2,108 df; $P < .05$). The Duncan Multiple Range Test indicated significantly higher achievement motivation on the part of white subjects at the lowest age level when compared to Negroes of the same age (respective means = 33.35 and 39.75; $P < .05$). Even though none of the other simple effects were significant, analysis of Figure 3 indicated an increase in motivation for Negro subjects as age increased, and a decrease in motivation on the part of white subjects as age increased.

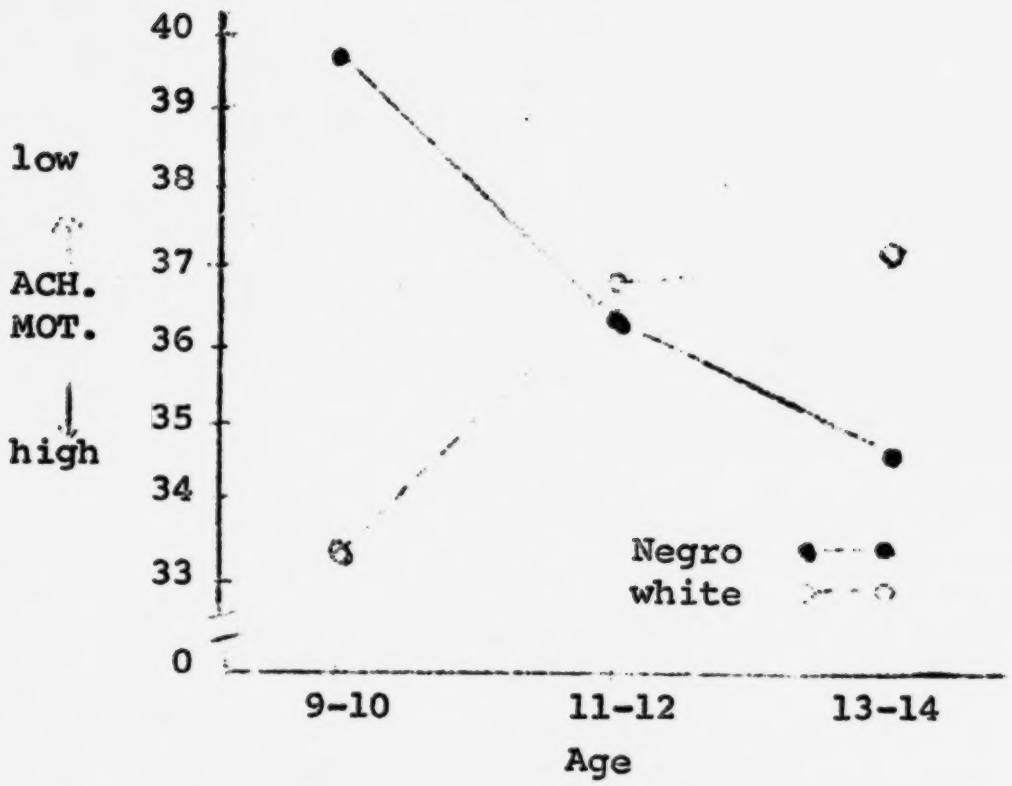

Figure 3. Age x Race interaction for Achievement Motivation
Factor VI: Theoretical General Achievement Motivation.

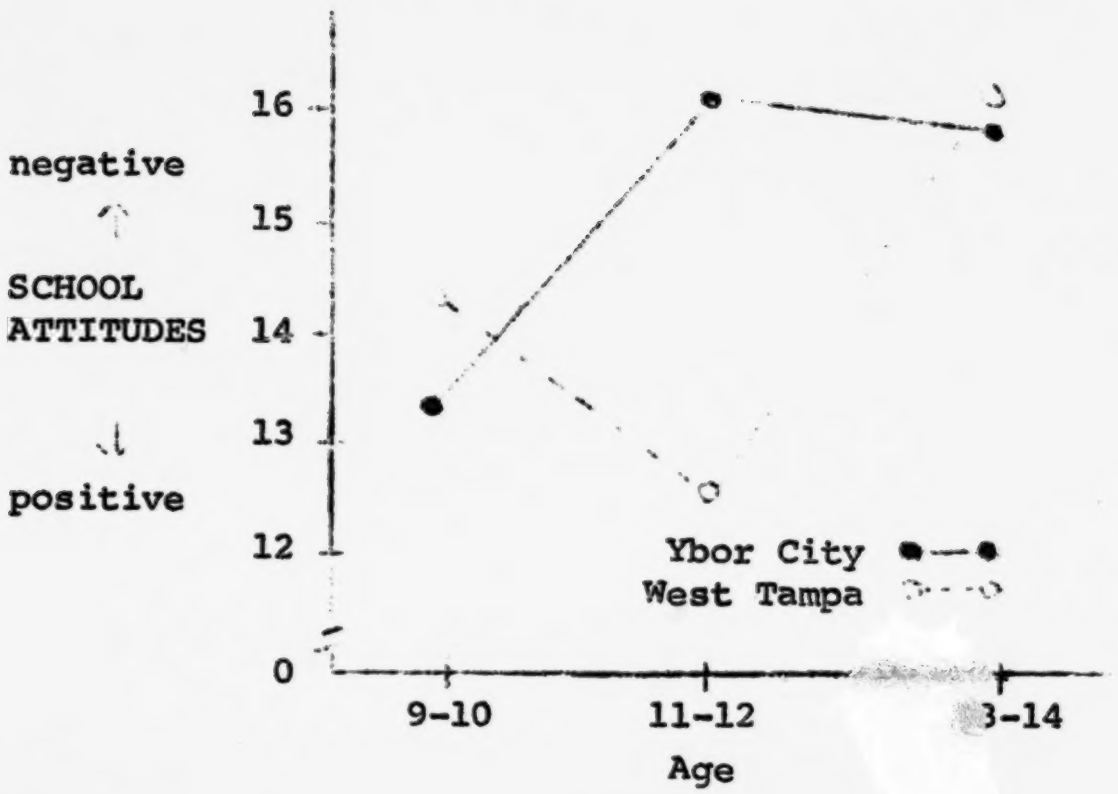

Figure 4. Age x Club interaction for Attitudes Toward School.
Factor II: Teacher Acceptance or Rejection

Scores for each of the factors comprising the Atittude Towards School Measure were analyzed by the same analysis of variance procedure used for the alienation and achievement motivation scales. Significant differences were found for two of the five factors on the school attitude measure. A significant age by club interaction was found on Factor II: Teacher Acceptance or Rejection ($F = 3.37$ for 2,108 df; $P < .05$). The results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test showed that there was a significant difference between the means of the 11-12 year old Ybor City and West Tampa Clubs (respective means = 12.50 and 16.10; $P < .05$) indicating that the subjects from the West Tampa group perceived their teachers as being more supportive, helpful, and understanding than did the Ybor City subjects. In addition, significant differences were found between the 11-12 and 13-14 year old groups from West Tampa (respective means = 12.50 and 16.10; $P < .05$) and the 11-12 year old West Tampa and 13-14 year old Ybor City Groups (means = 12.50 and 15.97; $P < .05$). Both the older West Tampa and Ybor City groups perceived more teacher rejection than the middle age West Tampa group (cf.Figure 4).

Consistent with the findings on the alienation factors, a significant race main effect was found on Factor III: School Uselessness ($F = 3.37$ for 2,108 df; $P < .05$). The Negro subjects viewed school as being more irrelevant to everyday reality than did their white counterparts.

DISCUSSION

As noted in the results section, significant differences were found between the white and Negro subjects on Factors I, III, VI, and VII of the alienation measure irrespective of age or Boys' Club affiliation. In all cases, the Negro subjects exhibited significantly more alienation than did their white counterparts. These findings were consistent with those reported in the literature by Lefcourt and Ladwig (1964), and Hammonds (1964).

With respect to the interpretation of specific content, on Factor I: Powerlessness, the Negro subjects manifested a greater degree of self-estrangement resulting from their perceived inability to cope with the complex problems of life, coupled with feelings of being manipulated by others so that there was little use in trying to control their own destiny. Similarly, on Factor III: Meaninglessness, there was a greater propensity on the part of Negro subjects to believe that progress was largely determined by luck, and that the rules for getting ahead do not really hold. A related finding for Factor VI: Norm-lessness, was that Negro subjects showed more approval for breaking the rules of society than did the white subjects. The content of Factor VI implies that the justification of such actions was derived from conformity to unwritten rules largely defined by the individual himself. In general, the Negro boys placed greater emphasis on getting ahead with little regard for the accepted means of doing so than did the white subjects.

White-Negro differences were also noted for Factor VII: Theoretical General Alienation. This scale was designed to measure the general characteristics of alienation derived from the theoretical notions of Dean (1961), Seeman (1959), and other writers in the literature. The items comprising Factor VII cover many of the specific dimensions measured by the other alienation scales such as Powerlessness, Self-Estrangement, Hopelessness, and so forth. The results indicated that the Negroes were more alienated than the whites in terms of a composite measure of alienation.

The only other significant difference with respect to the alienation measure was a significant main effect for age on Factor IV: Hopeful Friendliness. The results indicated that as subjects of both races increased in age they appeared to lose faith in the idea that the problems facing society could be resolved through mutual understanding among people.

It was interesting to note that no significant differences were found on Factors II and V on the alienation measure. Factor II: A Conformist Protestant Ethic vs. an Anti-Social Hopelessness, was designed to measure the themes of the Protestant Ethic. It could be that the attitudes reflected in the content of this scale are so pervasive in our society that they rule out sub-cultural differences. Factor V: Psychosocial Isolation, stressed physical and mental separation from other individuals. The person who responds in an alienated mode to this factor perceives his existence as being characterized by aloneness. The lack of differences on Factor V possibly indicates that psycho-

social isolation was not characteristic of the groups being studied. In fact, observation of the subjects during testing would lead to the alternative conclusion that a high degree of social interaction and participation was more typically the case for the subjects used in the present study.

Significant effects were also found on two of the achievement motivation factors. A significant age by club interaction was found on Factor III: Reluctant Effort with Aversion to Reading. This factor attempts to measure aversion to hard work as indicated by a lack of desire to read and difficulty in remembering content after it was read. The results indicated that there was a significant increase in motivation (loss of aversion to hard work) between the youngest and middle age groups from the Ybor City Boys' Club. However, the age trend did not continue or maintain itself from the 11-12 year old to the 13-14 year old Ybor groups. In fact, analysis of Figure 2 indicates a drop in motivation (increase in aversion to work) between the middle and oldest groups so that the 13-14 year olds were not significantly different from the youngest group. Several alternative interpretations seem plausible for this finding. First, the Ybor City subjects came from a hard-core ghetto area in which many of the adults do not hold jobs. It could be that strong negative attitudes towards work were held by many of the parents in this area of the city. If this were the case it could be argued that the parents' influence was greatest for the 9-10 year olds and that this influence was substantially diminished during the onset of adolescence when youth traditionally strive

for independence. Apparently the increase in motivation can be considered transitory since the age effect tended to reverse itself at the highest age level. These findings may be contrasted with the relatively stable performance of the subjects from the West Tampa Club, who showed a tendency (non-significant) to increase in achievement motivation as a function of age.

The second possible explanation of the findings on Factor III relates to the reliabilities for this scale reported by Spilka (1970). He reported coefficents of .581 for an Indian sample, .671 for whites, and .626 for combined groups. These values suggest that any findings on this scale must be treated as tentative at best. Therefore, the trends discussed above can only be considered suggestive and a basis for more rigorous investigation.

The second significant finding on the achievement motivation measure was a significant race by age interaction on Factor VI: Theoretical General Achievement Motivation. The content of this factor stresses general characteristics of achievement motivation such as ambition, the setting of high goals, and the value of steady and hard work as a means to success. The results indicated that the white subjects at the 9-10 year old level were more highly motivated than their Negro counterparts. Figure 3 shows that as age increased the differences between the races decreased, with the whites losing motivation while the Negroes showed an increase. A possible explanation of these trends centers on the notion that as children reach the onset of adolescence they move away from the attitudes and values held in the home to those expressed in the schools, neighborhood, and other institutions. It

seems plausible that a basic difference existed with respect to the attitudes held by the parents of the white and Negro subjects and that the children at the 9-10 year old level reflect this difference. However, as age increased, the values of the home became less influential while those steming from outside the family took on added meaning.

Two of the five Attitudes Toward School factors yielded significant results. A significant age by club interaction was found on Factor II: Teacher Acceptance or Rejection, which measures the subject's perception of and relationship to the teacher. The content enables the subject to perceive the teacher in a supportive nurturent role or in a hostile and rejecting manner. As noted in Figure 4, the Ybor City subjects had low score at the 9-10 year old level (perceived teacher acceptance) and moved to a high score (teacher rejection) at the 11-12 year old level with the trend maintaining itself at the 13-14 year old mark. In contrast the West Tampa subjects started with a higher mean score at the 9-10 year old level (non-significant from the Ybor City group) and dropped in score at the 11-12 year old level. At this point the West Tampa group exhibited the greatest amount of perceived teacher acceptance of any of the groups evaluated. However, from the 11-12 year old level to the 13-14 year old level the trend toward lower score was reversed such that there was a significant increase in score (indicating teacher rejection) between the middle and oldest West Tampa groups.

The significant differences between the West Tampa and Ybor City subjects could very likely represent differences in the perception of

authoritarian figures in the general populations of these two areas. It could be that a more pervasive mistrust of adults representing the establishment existed in the Ybor City neighborhood than was the case in West Tampa. Therefore, children living in the ghetto surrounding the Ybor City Club would be more likely to perceive teachers in a negative posture at an early age than would West Tampa subjects.

The second significant difference found on the school attitudes measure was a race main effect on Factor III: School Uselessness. A comparison of the responses made by Negro and white subjects indicated that the Negroes were more apt to express the feeling that school was out of step with reality and that what was taught was either useless or harmful. This finding was consistent with those noted on four of the Alienation measures.

In summary, the above discussion has several implications for professionals trying to cope with the complex problems of poverty, ethnic differences, and urbanization. First, that simply because two individuals come from the same neighborhood and have relatively the same socio-economic backgrounds does not mean that they react to the institutions of society in a similar manner. This was especially the case in the present study with respect to individuals coming from different backgrounds (Negro and white). It should be mentioned that these differences were manifested by the time the subjects were 9 years old and that programs designed to counteract such effects should be initiated much earlier in life. Second, in several instances it was found that area lived in was related to the development of attitudes,

even though in the present study the neighborhoods from which the subjects came appeared to be more similar than different. Such differences may have importance in adequately developing programs in such neighborhoods to maximize the growth of children in meeting society's challenges. Last, new and more sensitive procedures must be developed in order to provide a clearer picture of the way alienation, motivation, and school attitudes develop. Only through knowing when differences begin to develop can preventative action be taken.

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